# ARCHAEOLOGICAL SALVAGE RECOVERY
# SITE 31SK15
# STOKES COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
# NCDOT B-2634 AND B-2635

## INTRODUCTION

Coastal Carolina Research, Inc., conducted an archaeological salvage recovery of site 31SK15 located in Stokes County, North Carolina, GS-93-0003; GS-93-0004; ER-94-7741 (Figure 1). The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) plans to replace the bridges on NC 311 over the Dan River and the Dan River overflow near Walnut Cove, Stokes County, North Carolina (Figure 2). During early construction, the NCDOT was notified of the presence of cultural material encountered in a drainage ditch. The cultural material and exposed features are believed to be associated with archaeological site 31SK15. The existing highway NC 311 is the northern boundary for the Sauratown National Register Historic District, and 31SK15 is likely temporally associated with the Sauratown Complex to the south. The bridge replacement had been designed to avoid impacts to the district.

The study was conducted for the Planning and Environmental Branch of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA-PL89-665); the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation's regulations for compliance with Section 106, codified as 36 CFR Part 800; and Section 4(f) of the Federal Transportation Act. The scope of the investigations was consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation Projects* (Federal Register, Vol. 48, No. 190, September 1983, P. 44716-44742, et seq.). The excavations were conducted in accordance with a scope of work (SOW) prepared by the North Carolina Department of Transportation and dated March 12, 1997.

The project area is located on the north side of NC 311 on the west side of the Dan River in its floodplain. An initial survey of the project area was conducted by NCDOT (Joy 1993) and followed by test investigations (Joy 1994). The testing was conducted using a bucket auger following consultation with the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). No subsurface features were encountered, although evidence of a buried soil horizon was noted. Since the project appeared to have no effect on any significant archaeological resources, it was approved for construction.

When the project began construction, a previously unplanned lateral ditch was added to provide drainage for the wet floodplain during the construction of the temporary detour. The subsequent excavation of the 280-m drainage ditch cut through cultural features which indicated that a prehistoric site was present. The ditch runs west to east. The portion of the ditch within the site area was the focus of the salvage recovery and included approximately 200 m of the ditch.

The purpose of the project was to salvage any significant archaeological information that had been impacted by the drainage ditch and to provide additional information on the nature, condition, and extent of the site. This was done by cleaning and fully documenting approximately 200 m of both lateral ditch walls (400 m total), and by excavating any features that had been disturbed by the ditch as well as features intruding into these wall features. The

lateral ditch wall stratigraphy was documented, and the entire 400 m area was photographed. In addition, three block trenches, one 3-x-10-m and two 3-x-6-m, were excavated.

The areas above the features in the walls of the lateral ditch and the areas of the block trenches were stripped of the plow zone using a small grader. Other soil zones were removed by hand until cultural features or sterile subsoil became visible. Features were mapped, profiled if excavated, and photographed. A 1-gallon sample of soil was taken from each stratigraphic zone for flotation purposes, and a quart of matrix was obtained from each zone for future soil analyses. The remainder of the excavated feature material was waterscreened through ¼ - and 1/16-inch mesh. Soil from stratigraphic zones above the features was dry screened through 1/4-inch mesh, with a 5-gallon sample taken from each unit for waterscreening through 1/4- and 1/16-inch mesh.

In addition to the archaeological excavations, Keith Seramur of Geonetics Corporation conducted geomorphological investigations.

The project required 235 person-days and was conducted from March 25 to May 1, 1997. Loretta Lautzenheiser served as Principal Investigator, Jane Eastman was the Field Director, and Victoria Saxe was the Assistant Field Director. The field crew was composed of Dan Lynch, Kevin Magnuson, Brian Overton, Shane Petersen, Christina Roberts, Sandra Smith, Justin Stutz, Michael Swaim, and Clay Swindell. Lab assistance was provided by Wanda Stiles, Christina Roberts, Justin Stutz, and Clay Swindell. Mary Ann Holm analyzed the faunal remains, and Jane Eastman analyzed all other artifacts. Shane Petersen, Brian Overton, Victoria Saxe, and Ellen Mayo prepared the graphics.

Background research for this project was conducted primarily at the Research Laboratories of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The university has researched this area extensively in connection with the Siouan Project, which included the Sauratown sites.

Sources for research included the Davis Library at the University of North Carolina; the North Carolina Collection at the University of North Carolina; the Office of State Archaeology (OSA); the Survey and Planning Branch, North Carolina Department of Archives and History; the Stokes County Courthouse; and the library at Coastal Carolina Research.

Project assistance was provided by Tom Padgett and Deborah Joy of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), Planning and Environmental Branch in Raleigh, and by Vickie Davis and Andy Baker of the NCDOT in Stokes County. Lance Covington provided space for waterscreening at the NCDOT maintenance yard. Dr. R. P. Stephen Davis, Jr., and Dr. H. Trawick Ward of the Research Laboratories of Anthropology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill provided valuable research assistance. Dr. I. Randolph Daniel, Jr., of East Carolina University aided in the lithic analysis. In addition, Billy L. Oliver, Ph.D., Office of State Archaeology, and Steve Claggett, State Archaeologist, provided valuable input to the project. We would like to thank Mr. Norman Nifong, the adjacent property owner, for his cooperation. The efforts of all these persons are greatly appreciated.